

U.S. Senator

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HARKIN: NEW STATE-BY-STATE REPORT ON HEALTH CARE DISPARITIES UNDERSCORES THE NEED FOR NATIONAL, QUALITY, AFFORDABLE CARE

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA), Chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pension (HELP) Committee, today issued the following statement on a new report showing state-by-state disparities in health care. The Commonwealth Fund Commission on a High Performance Health System's second state scorecard showed the cost and quality of health care, as well as access to care and health outcomes, continue to vary widely among states. Across states, health insurance coverage for adults declined, health care costs rose and quality improved in areas where outcomes were reported to the public.

"This report is just the latest in a long line of research proving that reform cannot wait. Each day, more and more Americans find themselves without coverage, businesses see health insurance as out of reach for their employees and patients go uneducated about the preventative steps they can take to keep them well in the first place. With disparities this large in the system from state-to-state; we need to act now to increase access to quality, affordable health care coverage for all Americans. All signs are pointing toward the need for reform this year and that is exactly what we intend to deliver."

The report, *Aiming Higher: Results from the 2009 State Scorecard on Health System Performance*, is a follow-up to the Commission's 2007 State Scorecard report; it ranks states on 38 indicators in the areas of access, prevention/treatment quality, avoidable hospital use and costs, healthy lives and equity. In 2009, Vermont, Hawaii, Iowa, Minnesota, Maine and New Hampshire lead the nation as top performers on a majority of scorecard indicators. Leading states set new, higher benchmarks on a majority of indicators. A full copy of the report can be found here: <http://www.commonwealthfund.org/>.